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ABSTRACT

This project was designed to solicit parental perceptions of Caroline Street Elementary School (Saratoga Springs, New York) in terms of Effective Schools, a method of assessing school improvement. Families (n=334) were asked to provide their perceptions regarding correlational characteristics identified as vital to successful school programs: positive school climate; academic goals and high expectations; clearly defined curricular and planning processes; monitoring student progress; student participation; homework; parent and community involvement; rewards and incentives; and safety and discipline. About one third (112) of the returns were deemed usable. Analysis of the data showed that respondents perceived all correlate items to exist in the school, however for some correlate items, there were identifiable differences between what parents perceive was most important and what they perceived to be in actual existence. Overall the area related to school climate received high ratings, with safety perceived to be the most important item. Based on both the qualitative and quantitative analysis, the following recommendations were made: (1) safety and security should continue to be a priority; (2) appoint a subcommittee to investigate learning centered curriculum and assessment and to propose an assessment model; (3) develop and distribute a building-wide curriculum outline; (4) consider retaining a full-time library/media specialist; (5) present the proposed recommendations to parents both in writing and at a parent schoolwide meeting; (6) consider a 24-hour telephone voice information line; (7) initiate a training program to assist parents in study skills so they may assist students at home and as volunteers in the classroom; (8) continue recognition for achievement in the special areas; (9) train parents to assist bus drivers, cafeteria personnel, and during recreation activities; (10) appoint a subcommittee to examine technologies; and (11) appoint a committee to generate activities that would encourage parental involvement, community pride, and social responsibility. (Contains 28 references and the school planning committee survey instrument.) (ND)

ED 387 475

# Analysis of Parent Perceptions on Effective School Correlates: A Springboard for Planning

**Presented To The Eastern Educational Research Association, Hilton Head, South Carolina, March 1-4, 1995**

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# Analysis of Parent Perceptions on Effective School Correlates: A Springboard for Planning

**by: Dr. David R. Murray, Associate Professor, Alice Lloyd College, Pippa Passes, KY**
**for: Caroline Street Elementary School, Saratoga Springs, NY**

*Abstract*

*This project was designed to solicit parental perceptions in regards to how well Caroline Street Elementary School was meeting several areas identified in the Effective Schools Research. From 334 families asked to participate in the survey in the late fall of 1994, 112 returns were received which were deemed usable. Respondents were asked to provide their perceptions regarding the importance and existence of correlational characteristics taken from the Effective Schools literature. The survey questionnaire was validated by a random selection of teachers and a number of members from the Home School Association. The analysis of the data showed that respondents perceived all correlate items to exist in the school. However, for some correlate items, there were identifiable differences between what parents perceived was most important and what they perceived to be in actual existence.*

*Overall the area related to school climate received fairly high ratings. Safety, by far, was perceived to be the most important item. More than 87% of the respondents rated safety as a priority. In regards to the area of academic goals and expectations, there were observable differences related to the importance of emphasizing student success and potential rather than focusing on student shortcomings and the implementation of this practice. Parents also perceived that a discrepancy exists between what was experienced and the importance related to the monitoring of student progress. This was particularly related to parent communication. Homework was not perceived as a priority except in regards to both purposefulness and clarity. Rewards and incentives were perceived to be present although their existence was rated slightly lower than their perceived importance. Recognition of excellence in special areas was identified. In the areas of parent and community involvement, correlates reflected a strong existence. In fact, perceptions related to the importance of parent involvement in the planning process and its existence were very close. Finally, the implementation of identified discipline policies was rated as very important. Parents perceived that issues related to safety and discipline should be reviewed regularly as a general matter of discourse.*

*A host of qualitative findings were also cited. Among the strengths mentioned were the financial support provided for the school, quality teachers, and the school representing a strong 'neighborhood' school concept. Areas perceived to be weaknesses included a perception that some of the tenured teachers were complacent, lack of support for the school library/media program, improvement of parent-teacher communications, more innovation needed in teaching techniques and methods in use, and better student control needed especially in the cafeteria and on the bus. Based on both the qualitative and quantitative analysis, recommendations were made for the Planning Committee to consider. In some cases, recommendations were made which were to be forwarded to the district level for future consideration.*

# Analysis of Parent Perceptions on Effective School Correlates: A Springboard for Planning

by Dr. David R. Murray, Alice Lloyd College, Pippa Passes, KY, for the Caroline Street School Planning Team, Saratoga Springs, NY

**Introduction:**

The Effective Schools movement in the United States, having its origins with such pioneer researchers and school reformers as Ronald Edmonds of Harvard University and Lawrence Lezotte of Michigan, has steadily grown and emerged to be one of the most respected ways of assessing school improvement. It was so respected that the state of New York established, through the New York State Education Department, an Effective Schools Consortium. Early in 1984, the Regents Action Plan raised standards and expectations for all students in New York state. A resource allocation plan created the Effective Schools Consortia Network designed to assist districts in developing improved education programs which would emerge at the school building level. It was felt that a school building level planning team would be the major vehicle for bringing about more effective schools. To rise to the challenges, a School Planning Team was established at Caroline Street School. Caroline Street School is a graded K-5 elementary school with approximately 500 pupils. The school is located in the historic community of Saratoga Springs, New York, some thirty miles north of the capitol city of Albany. Over the last five years, the School Planning Team has developed and implemented several changes. The team represents teachers, staff, administrators, parents, special area teachers and educational specialists. To insure that the team represents the perceptions of the school community, periodic surveys are conducted. Individual survey responses are anonymous and confidential. When grouped with other responses, the perceptions provide a profile which assists the School Planning Team to establish a comprehensive school improvement plan.

**Purpose of the Study:**

Taylor (1990) identified the school building organization as the major unit for change with that change being driven by a school based management process. Working under this assumption, that each school building is the strategic unit for effective school improvement, the Caroline Street School Planning Team designed a survey instrument from current research on the characteristics of Effective Schools. The purpose of the study was to solicit parental perceptions in regards to how well Caroline Street School is doing in several areas identified in the Effective Schools research. Respondents could rate their perceptions on both the importance and the existence of certain correlational characteristics that have been identified as vital to successful school programs. In addition, parents were asked to provide feedback concerning perceived strengths, areas in need of improvement and suggestions on how the various school programs could be further strengthened. The vital feedback would assist the planning team in several ways.

**Project Goals:**

To establish a framework and create a base in which the project could develop, the following goals were established:

- The parent survey would help establish priorities upon which the Planning Team could act;
- The parent survey would help develop an understanding of what can be addressed at the building level and what should be forwarded to the district office in the form of recommendations;

- The parent survey would provide opportunities to parents to contribute to the planning process;

- The parent survey process would introduce parents to the concept of Effective Schools and the various components of that knowledge base;

- The project would begin to orient the building level school staff and faculty towards employing research and more scientific procedures in decision making processes for planning purposes and overall school improvement;

- The project will establish an assessment model that other schools could assimilate and promote leadership opportunities for planning team members within the area.

**Characteristics of Effective Schools:**

The Effective Schools movement can trace its roots to the late Ronald Edmonds, a researcher and educator from Harvard University. Unfortunately, he died in 1983 before he could fully realize his contributions to school improvement efforts. Basically, Dr. Edmonds challenged the theory that familiar effects outweighed any school effects on learning. Some of these familiar effects include the family's socio-economic status, urban location, or population composition. Many school systems used these characteristics as excuses and made no attempt to improve schools under their care.

Generally, other researchers suggested that expectations for achievement by both teachers and the community had a great deal to do with student performance and school performance. From 1971 to 1979 the results of several studies related to Effective Schools research were published. This body of knowledge emerged from New York, California, Michigan, New England and London, England. Ron Edmonds identified five effective schools correlates and introduced them. They include (1) strong instructional leadership, (2) clear instructional focus, (3) positive school climate, (4) high expectations and (5) measurement of student achievement. Later, the New York State Education Department extended these original correlates to include eleven characteristics. On-going planning processes, academic goals, clearly defined curricula, opportunities for student responsibility/participation, a reward system and parent/community involvement were added. These became an integral part of the general Effective Schools' characteristics to help determine student success and to identify major concerns. The Effective Schools Consortia Unit of the New York State Education Department provided the following research summary on the characteristics of an Effective School (New York State Department of Education, Effective Schools Unit, 1987).

**Positive School Climate.** Brookover and Schneider (1975), Zigarmi (1981) and Tesh (1992), clearly identify that attitudes and values that establish the social climate within a school also have a direct impact upon how people (students and teachers) perform. That is to say, if the atmosphere provides a supportive and friendly community climate and the physical environment is clean and attractive, it will be conducive to quality teaching and learning.

**Academic Goals and High Expectations.** Clearly, setting challenging but attainable standards and communicating those standards within high expectations is a priority of any effective school. Brookover, (1978), Good (1979) and Rosenshine (1983) have stressed teacher expectations to encourage students to do well in both tests and in earning good grades, is a true characteristic for effectiveness. Further, Brookover (1978), Brundage (1979) and Berliner (1976), all indicate that learning considerations should be the most important criteria used when making decisions within the schools.

**Clearly Defined Curricula and Planning Process.** Edmonds (1979), Rosenshine (1983),Venesky and Winfield (1979) and Kemp and Hall (1992), have identified the fact that clearly defined curricula that engage a planning process to define and prioritize goals and objectives, and sequences and organizes content to facilitate optimal

student learning, is truly important. Further, the content should be reviewed by teachers for accuracy and appropriateness and modified to increase effectiveness. Finally, continuity across grade levels should be one of the top priorities by teachers. In regards to the planning process, Brookover and Lezotte (1979), point out that the individual school should be the appropriate place for curriculum planning. Others such as Lawrence, Baker, Hansen and Elsie (1974), suggest that involvement of teachers collectively can promote common purpose and effective change.

**Monitoring of Student Progress.** Closely aligned to curricular issues is the monitoring of student progress. Teachers should match the pre-defined objectives with student performance. They should look at assessment and diagnosis as a way to not only monitor student progress but to examine the effectiveness of their instructional methods. Brookover and Lezotte (1979), Cohen (1981) and Evertson (1982), all make a good case for this correlate. Changes should be based on student performance and alignment between the tests and curriculum should be done in a systematic way (Meyers and Carlson, 1992).

**Student Participation.** Encouraging students to be self-reliant and creating a vehicle whereby a sense of responsibility can gradually develop should be one of the priorities of an effective school. This concept is reflected in the literature provided by Emmer (1982), Evertson (1981) and Rutter (1979). It is generally understood that to become self-reliant, students should be allowed to gradually make their own decisions. As schools create these opportunities, students will become more responsible.

**Parent and Community Involvement.** It has been known for a long time that parent involvement, particularly in support of the instructional program, strengthens success among their children. Effective Schools literature suggests that procedures for involvement must be clearly communicated and information related to helping children with learning should be provided. Brookover (1978), Levine (1982) and Wilson (1981) are among the contributors to this literature. Helping with homework is also an integral part of this correlate.

**Rewards and Incentives.** Providing for a systematic set of rewards and incentives based on pre-defined objective standards can increase the effectiveness of classroom learning. When it is consistent and parents are informed about their children's success, students will strive towards improvement (Emmer, 1982).

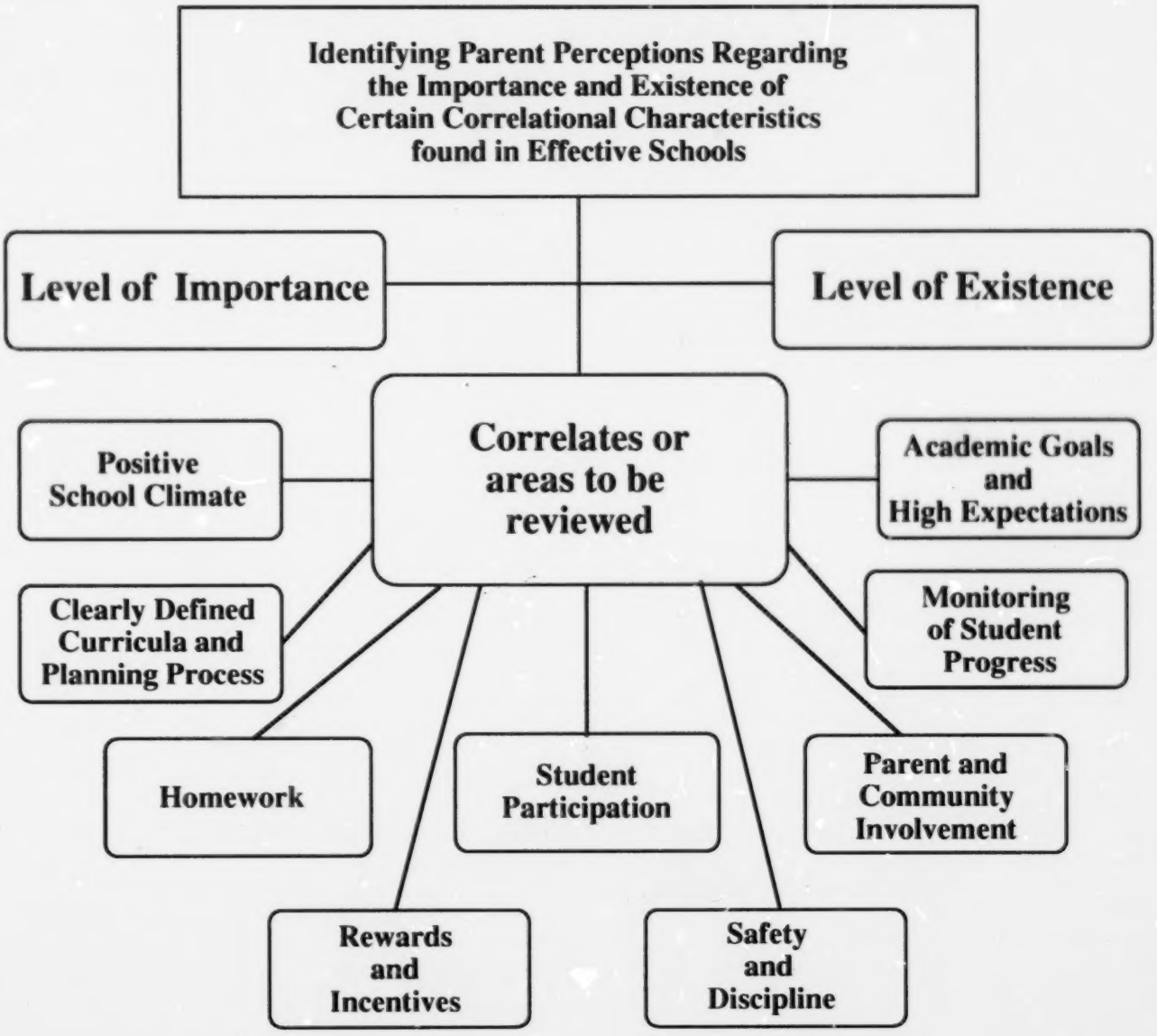
**Safety and Discipline.** The literature suggests that every school should have a written code of conduct that defines specific and acceptable behavior. Within the same document, procedures and consequences should be defined. In addition, during administration of the code, students should be told why they are being disciplined. Edmonds (1979), Rutter (1979) and others, strengthen the support for this correlate. Stringfield (1992) suggests that standardizing operating procedures are characteristic of highly reliable organizations.

Finally, Ron Edmonds would suggest that the true measure of school improvement is when a school can bring an equal percentage of its highest and lowest social classes to a minimum mastery (Edmonds, 1982). If the Effective Schools correlates are in place and the school is working towards effective implementation, Edmonds expectations can be realized.

The Caroline Street School survey will help the Planning Committee understand how parents perceive the school program in relation to the pre-defined correlates. From this understanding the School Planning Committee will be in a better position to refine, revise, extend or delineate programs or efforts related to making Caroline Street School more effective. Collegial offerings of suggestions for alternative solutions in both teaching and development of programs can be proposed to improve situations.

Diagram No. 1
Research Design Model by Area

# Caroline Street Elementary School
# Effective Schools Research Project
# Parent Survey


Identifying Parent Perceptions Regarding the Importance and Existence of Certain Correlational Characteristics found in Effective Schools
Level of Importance
Level of Existence
Correlates or areas to be reviewed
Positive School Climate
Academic Goals and High Expectations
Clearly Defined Curricula and Planning Process
Monitoring of Student Progress
Homework
Student Participation
Parent and Community Involvement
Rewards and Incentives
Safety and Discipline

**Research Procedures:**

**Design of the Questionnaire.** The survey instrument used by the Planning Committee to solicit parent perceptions was designed in two specific sections to obtain both raw data for quantitative analyses on correlate areas and to record qualitative information. Part I required responses related to parents' perceptions concerning the importance and existence of a variety of general characteristics provided by the Effective Schools Consortia Network of the New York State Education Department. Some questions were changed from the Education Department listing to achieve brevity or better readability. The committee also added other questions to expand the instrument to meet local building level needs. In this part of the questionnaire, questions were presented from nine correlate areas. These areas included: Positive School Climate, Academic Goals and High Expectations, Clearly Defined Curricula and Planning Process, Homework, Monitoring of Student Progress, Rewards and Incentives, Safety and Discipline, Student Participation and Parent and Community Involvement. Please refer to Diagram No. 1, Research Design Model by Area.

Respondents were asked to provide their perceived importance of a specific characteristic and their perceived existence of that characteristic in the school. Both the importance indicator response section and the existence response section was designed on a five point scale. In the importance category, respondents were asked to rate the correlate questions from priority (5) to not important (1), by filling in the appropriate bubble. The existence category response section was also designed in a similar fashion where the high rating indicated always (5) and the low rating indicated never (1). Respondents were requested to fill in one bubble for each of the two categories for each question on the survey instrument.

The second part of the questionnaire was designed to be a free response section where respondents could provide narrative information. In this section, five questions were designed to elicit qualitative responses. Among the questions included perceptions of respondents regarding strengths of the school programs, areas of perceived need for improvement, suggestions that might strengthen the various programs, perceived priorities and other comments that parents may be willing to provide.

The draft questionnaire was reviewed and validated by a random selection of teachers in the school and a number of members from the Home School Association (HSA). Suggestions were discussed and considered and corrections were made when deemed appropriate. A final draft was then compiled for distribution. A self-addressed, postage paid envelope was provided with the survey for the convenience of the parents. In addition, a box labeled "Parent Survey," was placed in the school foyer should parents prefer to deliver the questionnaire personally. A cover letter was provided and signed by the two parent representatives as they served as the parent liaison for the Planning Committee. Refer to Appendix 1, Cover Letter and Appendix 2, Survey Instrument.

**Population Sample:**

The population sample in the survey included the 334 families who had children in grades Kindergarten through grade five at Caroline Street Elementary School. Only one response per family was requested no matter how many children they had attending the school. Initially 105 surveys were returned. To increase the number of returned responses, follow-up procedures were employed. A feature article was placed in the school newsletter and a follow-up letter from the principal was sent home with the children to remind parents to fill out the survey questionnaire and to return it to the school. The follow-up activities increased returns by 13, bringing the total number of parent responses to 118. This represented approximately 35.33% of the total population. It should be noted that when taking into consideration the large number of parents of who elected not to fill out and return the questionnaire,combined with some of the more critical points cited in the qualitative section of the study, the decision not to participate in they survey may have been based on parental apathy or a general lack of interest in the school program. Therefore, a caveat may be in order that it is possible non-response may have slightly biased the population sample representation. Follow-up procedures were employed to encourage participation. This, however, did not appear to increase the number of respondents to any great extent.

Upon receipt of the questionnaires, they were reviewed for usability. Incomplete or incoherent survey returns were excluded. After completing this process, 112 questionnaires were deemed usable for further analysis.

**Analysis of the data:**

In general, respondents to the School Planning Team's survey considered all of the effective school correlates listed on the survey instrument to be of importance to Caroline Street School's education program. More often then not, it was also perceived that the correlate items existed in the school. However, there were some identifiable differences between what the respondents perceived as important and what they perceived as in actual existence. In other words, for some correlates, their importance was rated more highly than their existence and vice versa. In essence, this suggests that parents generally perceive that making good conditions better, should be a on-going focus in any school planning efforts.

**School Climate.** In regards to the cleanliness and condition of the school building, respondents generally perceived Caroline Street School to be in good order. The existence of this characteristic was actually rated higher than its perceived importance. Also, parents generally perceived that the children in attendance at the school were proud of the school. In a similar manner teachers and staff held the school in high regards and the respondents perceived that both the importance and the existence of this characteristic were close to equal.

Of major significance were parents' concerns for the school as a safe place. There was a difference between parents' perception of its importance and their perceptions of its actual existence within the school. However, safety issues received the highest ratings of any correlate in both importance and existence. This would suggest that safety is an ongoing concern which is reinforced by the general assumption that when safety is related to children, it can never be safe enough. An overwhelming 87.5% of the respondents rated **safety as a priority.**

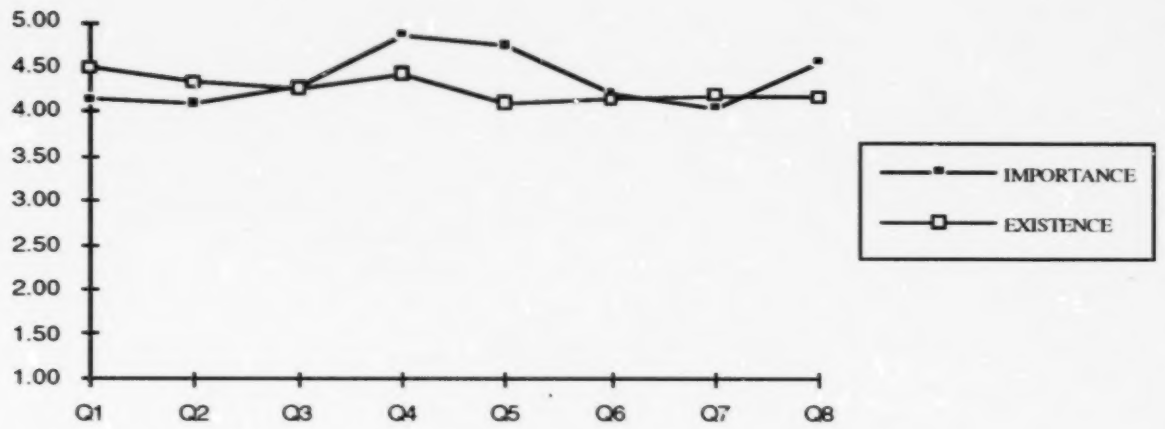
The consistency and fair treatment of children displays a broad gap between perceived importance and perceived existence. Parents felt stronger about equity and fair treatment issues within the school climate than they believe exist. Over 74% rated fair and consistent treatment of students as a priority, while only 25% responded that this characteristics was always in existence. Further this was reinforced by a similar response to the correlate found under the category, Academic Goals and Expectations, related to the treatment of students by emphasizing success rather than focusing on failures and shortcomings.

Participants in the survey generally felt that the purpose of the school was clear and well articulated. There was very close agreement between the perceived importance of this characteristic and its perceived existence at Caroline Street School. Further, the parents who responded to the survey generally felt comfortable and welcome when visiting the school and they perceived that the students generally enjoy coming to school.

**Table 1**
**School Climate - Existence Vs Importance by Weighted Score**
**Scale (1-5; 5 being the highest)**

| | | Importance | Existence |
|---|---|---|---|
| Q1. | School buildings are clean and in good condition. | 4.13 | 4.48 |
| Q2. | Students are proud of this school. | 4.08 | 4.33 |
| Q3. | Teachers & staff have pride in the school. | 4.28 | 4.24 |
| Q4. | The school is a safe place. | 4.86 | 4.41 |
| Q5. | Teachers & staff treat students fairly and consistently. | 4.73 | 4.08 |
| Q6. | The purpose of the school is clear. | 4.21 | 4.13 |
| Q7. | Parents feel comfortable and welcome. | 4.04 | 4.19 |
| Q8. | Students enjoy coming to school. | 4.56 | 4.16 |

**Figure 1**
**School Climate - Existence vs Importance by Weighted Score**
**Line Graph Comparison**

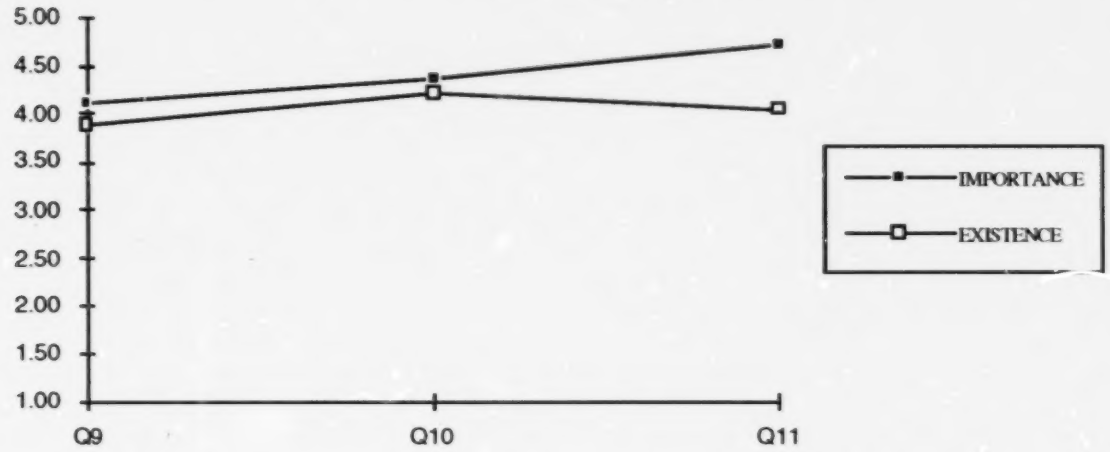



**Academic Goals and Expectations.** Within the correlates of academic goals and high expectations, parents perceived that the school needs to have high expectations for its students and that learning should be the most important reason for school. There was a fairly close correlation between the perceived existence and perceived importance of these characteristics. In contrast, the area related to student treatment by emphasizing success and potential rather than failure and shortcoming, demonstrated an observable difference between perceived existence and importance.

**Table 2**
**Academic Goals & Expectations - Existence Vs Importance by Weighted Score**
**Scale (1-5; 5 being the highest)**

| | | Importance | Existence |
|---|---|---|---|
| Q9. | Parents know school has high expectations for all students. | 4.12 | 3.88 |
| Q10. | Learning is seen as the most important reason for school. | 4.37 | 4.22 |
| Q11. | Students are treated in ways that emphasize success and potential rather than focusing on failures and shortcomings | 4.71 | 4.05 |

**Figure 2**
**Academic Goals & Expectations - Existence vs Importance by Weighted Score**
**Line Graph Comparison**




**Clearly Defined Curricula and Planning Process.** With regards to parent involvement in school planning, the level of perceived involvement and the perceived level of experience were very close, In fact, there was only a slight difference (.02) in the scores. This would suggest that the school adequately recognizes the value of school and community participation. The instructional program was perceived to be coordinated within and between grades. However, it should be noted that several respondents indicated they were unclear as to the interpretation of this characteristic and over 11% chose not to respond to this question. Although the curriculum is not formally outlined for parents in its entity, there is recognition of its partial existence as 50% of the parents indicated they always or usually were provided with this information. This curricular awareness may have been brought about by teachers sharing their unit plans or by parents having been exposed to a grade level or teacher in previous years as 20% of the respondents indicated that they rarely or never receive this kind of information. Perhaps the greatest concern within the correlate area is in the realm of matching instructional materials and activities to students' abilities. This characteristic demonstrates the broadest gap for all correlate items between perceived importance and existence.

**Table 3**
**Clearly Defined Curricula & Planning Process - Existence Vs Importance**
**by Weighted Score - Scale (1-5; 5 being the highest)**

| | | Importance | Existence |
|---|---|---|---|
| Q12. | Parents are involved in planning committees. | 3.74 | 3.76 |
| Q13. | Instructional program is coordinated within/between grades. | 3.92 | 3.89 |
| Q14. | Outline of curriculum is made available to parents. | 3.88 | 3.50 |
| Q15. | Instructional materials/activities are matched to students' abilities. | 4.36 | 3.58 |

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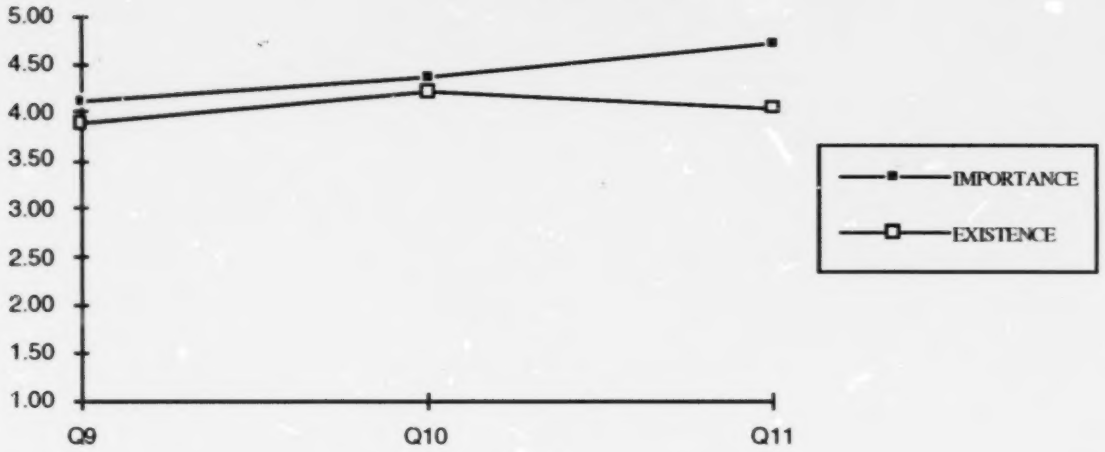
**Line Graph Comparison**

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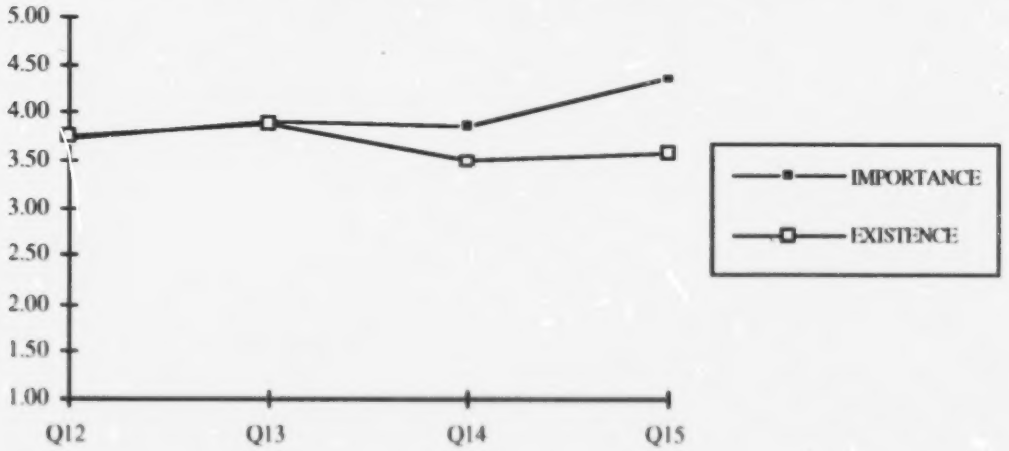
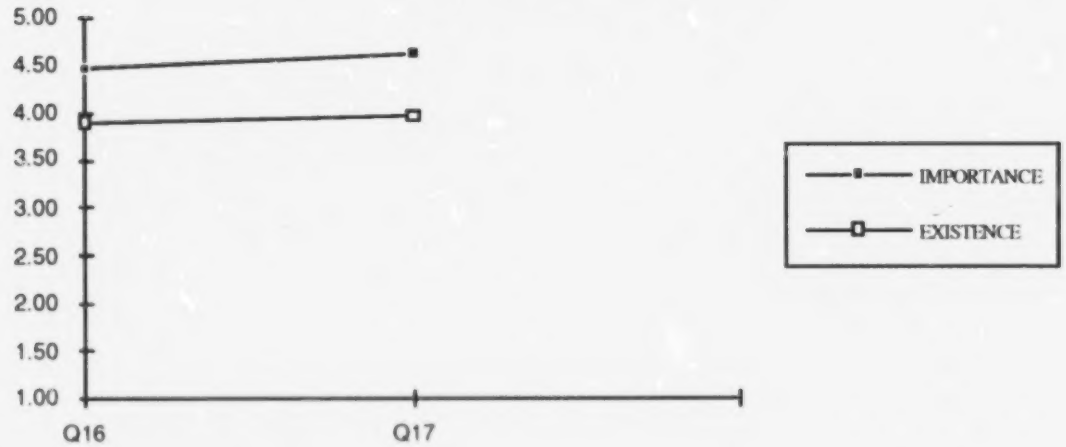



**Monitoring of Student Progress.** Formal measures of student progress are mandated by the State of New York and are required periodically. Respondents recognized the existence of these formal measures. However, a discrepancy exists between the perceived importance and the perceived existence as related to the day-to-day monitoring of students' progress. Over 67% of the parents indicated that teacher communication with parents in the form of conferences, notes, and phone calls, in regards to student progress was a priority but only 27% of the parents indicated that this always existed. Further, the respondents indicated that the importance of identifying and helping students not working up to their potential was not met as frequently as it should be. The differences in perception may indicate a need to develop better communications with parents to insure that there is continuity between the help provided at school and the assistance needed at home or out of school.

**Table 4**
**Monitoring of Student Progress - Existence Vs Importance by Weighted Score**
**Scale (1-5; 5 being the highest)**

| | | Importance | Existence |
|---|---|---|---|
| Q16. | Students not working up to potential are identified and helped. | 4.46 | 3.89 |
| Q17. | Teachers communicate with parents on student progress (conferences, notes, phone calls). | 4.63 | 3.95 |

**Figure 4**
**Monitoring of Student Progress - Existence vs Importance by Weighted Score**
**Line Graph Comparison**

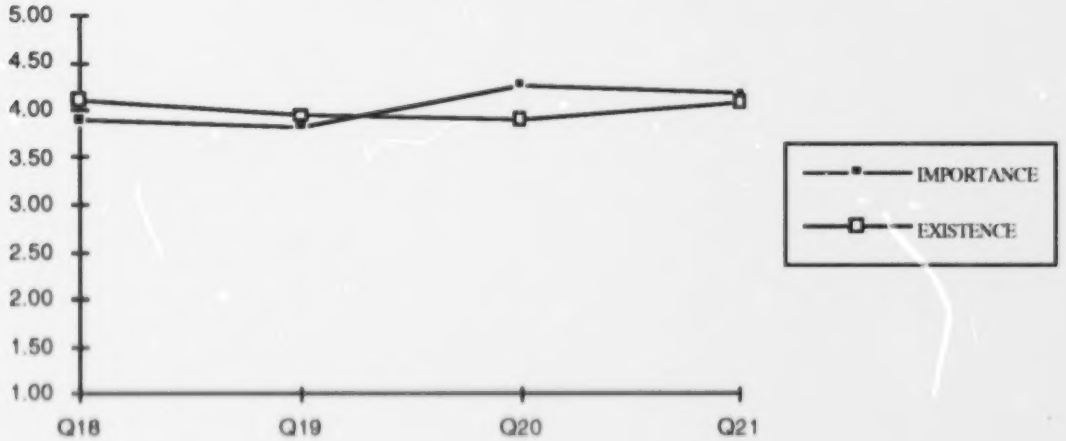



**Homework.** The category related to homework displayed very little difference between perceived importance and existence. For two of the correlate items, existence received a higher rating than importance. Generally, respondents to the questionnaire perceived that the importance of homework is communicated by the teachers and parental assistance is welcomed. Homework is also viewed to be purposeful or relevant. A slight difference is evident between the perceived importance and the existence of communicating homework assignments clearly. It is interesting to note that although homework was seen as important, it was not viewed as a priority issue except in terms of its purposefulness and how clearly it is defined. This appears to follow a current trend that has emerged whereby many parents believe that children need more time for family activities and recreation. When homework is not perceived to be purposeful or if parents feel that assignments are not clearly communicated, they may feel that it takes away from family time and its importance diminished.

**Table 5**
**Homework - Existence Vs Importance by Weighted Score**
**Scale (1-5; 5 being the highest)**

| | | Importance | Existence |
|---|---|---|---|
| Q18. | Teachers let parents know homework is important. | 3.91 | 4.11 |
| Q19. | Parental assistance with school work is welcomed and sought. | 3.84 | 3.94 |
| Q20. | Homework assignments are clearly communicated. | 4.26 | 3.89 |
| Q21. | Homework is purposeful and relevant. | 4.17 | 4.08 |

**Figure 5**
**Homework - Existence vs Importance**
**by Weighted Score - Line Graph Comparison**

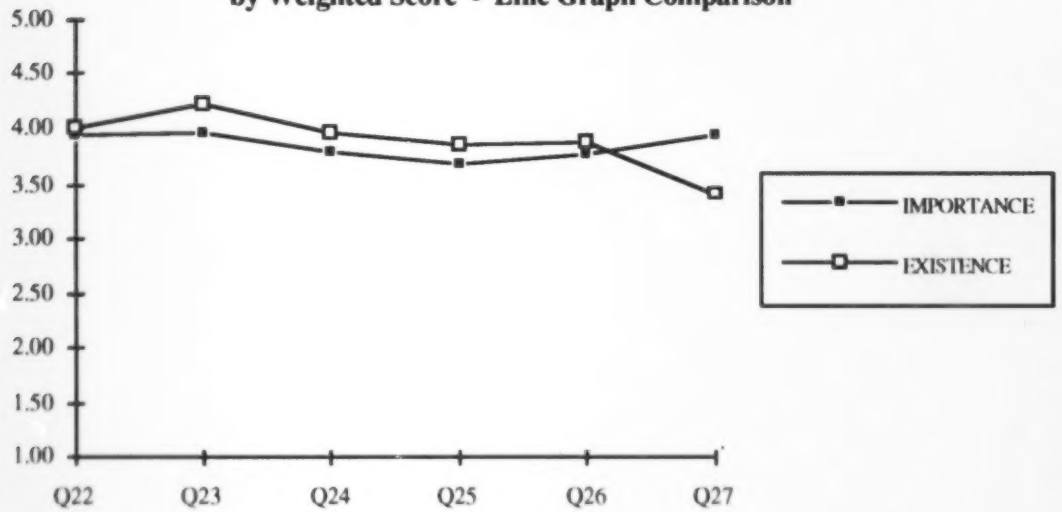



**Parent and Community Involvement.** With the exception of one characteristic, the parent and community involvement correlates reflect a strong existence which is rated slightly higher than their perceived importance. For the most part, it would indicate that parents perceive that the school is meeting its objectives in this area. The respondents perceive that faculty and staff encourage parent support in achieving the mission of the school. There are active parent groups in the building. In addition, the respondents to the questionnaire perceive that parents and the community are invited to school to share information and become involved in the school. This would include activities involving advisory capacities. Further, parents who wish to become involved can usually find a way to participate. The characteristic within this correlate area that reflects a difference is directly related to providing information to parents so that they may help their children at home. The respondents perceive it to be more important than what they perceive to exist. It appears that parental maybe more social than academic. This would suggest that staff and faculty need to provide more information and possibly training to parents related to techniques to help their children learn at home.

**Table 6**
**Parent & Community Involvement - Existence Vs Importance by Weighted Score**
**Scale (1-5; 5 being the highest)**

| | | Importance | Existence |
|---|---|---|---|
| Q22. | Staff encourages parents' support in achieving mission of the school. | 3.95 | 4.00 |
| Q23. | There is an active parent group in the building. | 3.96 | 4.23 |
| Q24. | Community people are invited to school to share information. | 3.79 | 3.96 |
| Q25. | Parents and community are involved in school activities through advisory committees. | 3.68 | 3.87 |
| Q26. | Ways for parents to become involved in school are clear. | 3.77 | 3.88 |
| Q27. | Staff provide parents with information and techniques to help students learn at home. | 3.94 | 3.41 |

**Figure 6**
**Parent & Community Involvement - Existence vs Importance by Weighted Score - Line Graph Comparison**

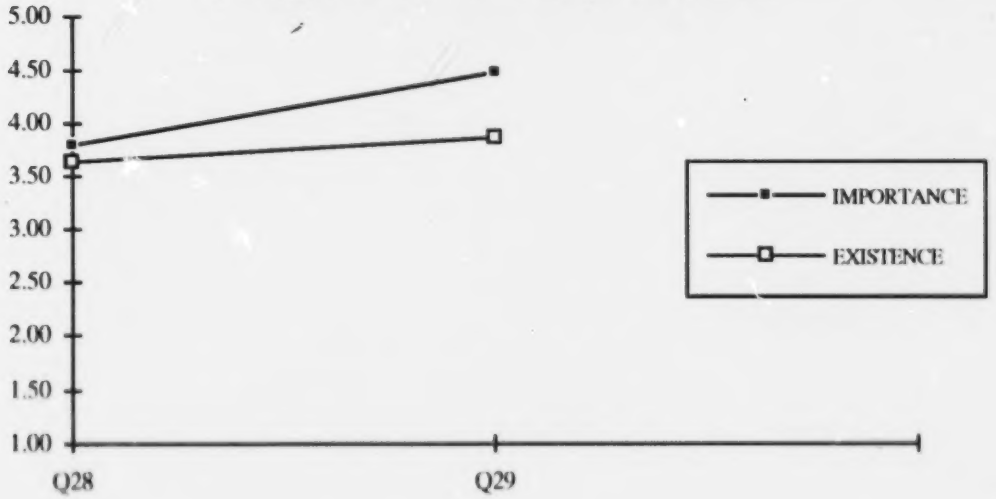



**Student Participation.** Parents responding to the questionnaire generally perceive that extracurricular activities are available to students at Caroline Street School and find them to be on an equal level of importance. Concerning perceptions related to students assuming responsibility for their learning, parents perceive the importance to be higher than its actual existence. This may be indicative to the age level where many children may not feel responsible for their own learning and success simply because they are too young. Nevertheless, parents may perceive that the seeds of these types of responsibilities are important and therefore need to be planted and cultivated. Patterns towards these ends need to be set and children may need to be taught responsibility.

**Table 7**
**Student Participation - Existence Vs Importance by Weighted Score**
**Scale (1-5; 5 being the highest)**

| | | Importance | Existence |
|---|---|---|---|
| Q28. | Extracurricular activities are available to all students. | 3.80 | 3.64 |
| Q29. | Students feel responsible for own learning and success. | 4.47 | 3.86 |

**Figure 7**
**Student Participation - Existence vs Importance**
**by Weighted Score - Line Graph Comparison**

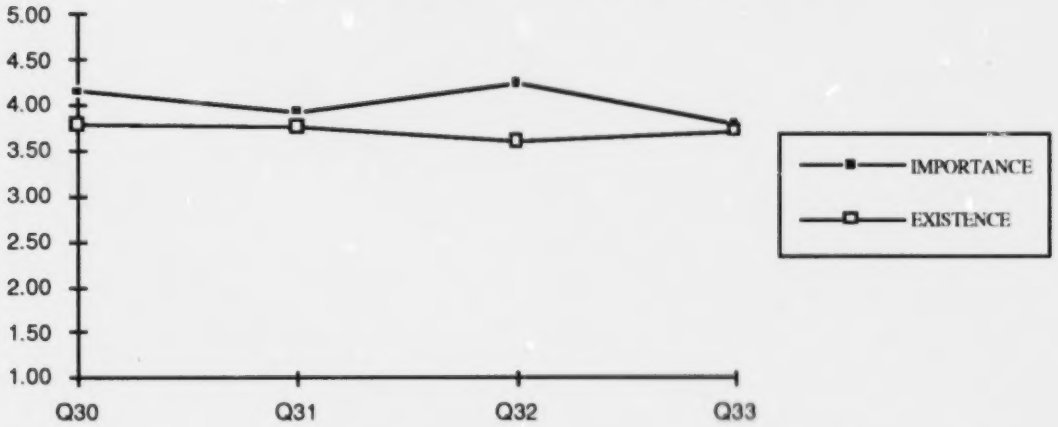



**Reward and Incentives.** The importance of student recognition for achievement rates only slightly higher than its existence by the respondents in all of the characteristics of this category. The school does in fact provide recognition and students generally know what to do to get the awards. Further student achievement is featured in displays, newspapers and other areas. There is, however, an observable difference in regards to the respondents' perceptions of recognition of personal effort and creativity. This would imply that traditional types of student outcomes related to test scores, mathematical averages, and what would generally be considered linear-sequential, cognitive performance, may receive the most recognition. This may be at the expense of other channels of learning such as in the creative process (e.g. visual arts and kinesthetic). Often these areas are overlooked. They may also take place outside the traditional classroom and may be developed in art, music and physical education, which may not be viewed with equal importance to standardized testing priorities.

**Table 8**
**Rewards & Incentives - Existence Vs Importance by Weighted Score**
**Scale (1-5; 5 being the highest)**

| | | Importance | Existence |
|---|---|---|---|
| Q30. | Student achievement is recognized by school. | 4.14 | 3.79 |
| Q31. | Students know about rewards and what to do to get them. | 3.93 | 3.76 |
| Q32. | Personal student effort and creativity are recognized. | 4.24 | 3.59 |
| Q33. | Student achievements are featured (displays, newspaper, etc.) | 3.78 | 3.73 |

**Figure 8**
**Rewards & Incentives - Existence vs Importance**
**by Weighted Score - Line Graph Comparison**

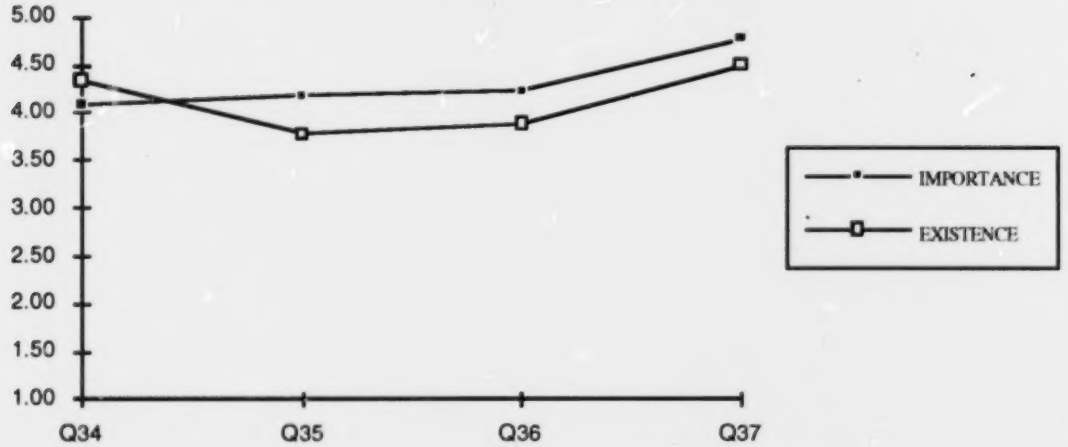



**Safety and Discipline.** Respondents to the survey generally agreed on the importance and existence of the *Code of Conduct* and feel oriented towards its contents. They find it important for parents to provide support to the school on discipline policies and rate this characteristic higher than it exists. In a similar fashion, the respondents want the staff to work towards consistency in discipline procedures while indicating that the existence of this trait is not on par with its perceived importance. In keeping with the concern aforementioned for safety, over 78% of the respondents indicated that it is a priority for students to feel safe at school. It appears that parents perceive safety and discipline are areas which should be reviewed regularly as a general matter of discourse.

**Table 9**
**Safety & Discipline - Existence Vs Importance by Weighted Score**
**Scale (1-5; 5 being the highest)**

| | | Importance | Existence |
|---|---|---|---|
| Q34. | The code of conduct reviewed for students and parents. | 4.09 | 4.33 |
| Q35. | Parents provide support to school on discipline policies. | 4.17 | 3.77 |
| Q36. | Staff is working towards consistency in discipline procedures. | 4.21 | 3.88 |
| Q37. | Students feel safe at school. | 4.77 | 4.48 |

**Figure 9**
**Safety & Discipline - Existence vs Importance**
**by Weighted Score - Line Graph Comparison**




**Qualitative Findings:**

A free response section was included in the survey questionnaire to afford the respondents an opportunity to express themselves freely concerning their general perceptions related to strengths and weaknesses of the Caroline Street School program. Parents were also asked to propose suggestions to strengthen the school and cite their priority concerning issues related to future planning team activities. Finally, a space was provided for general comments that respondents might wish to provide.

Overall, the respondents found Caroline Street School to be in good order and many strengths were cited. These strengths were indicated in four major areas. They include financial support for instruction, a clean and nicely maintained facility, supportive faculty and support staff and a strong neighborhood oriented school concept. Certainly, salaries of teachers and a budget to support the program are among the highest in the region. The average teacher salary at Caroline Street School is approximately $45,000. The physical facility was built in 1959 and is designed in a traditional single level style. The design fosters singular cell classrooms. Generally, this model provides for easy maintenance and is fairly simple to secure. In addition, the school is located in a well established safe neighborhood adjacent to a public recreation park.

Respondents indicated that about half of the faculty are excellent teachers. They went on to say that, "the attitude of most of the teachers is positive and beneficial to the children." Another parent said, "Generally there is a concerned, caring staff. The children seem to have a rapport with the teachers for the most part, and they [the children] want to perform." Some parents perceived that the teachers seem to work together. This included the special area teachers in art, music, etc. The art program, in particular, appeared to receive a great deal of praise. One respondent indicated a perception that Caroline Street School projected, "a strong sense of school pride and identity." Further the participant stated, "the teachers/administration seem above average and appear to be dedicated to doing the best they can within the limits they are presented with." One respondent indicated , "the school appears to do a wonderful job at including 'special needs children' in the learning experience."

Parents responding to the questionnaire generally perceive Caroline Street School to hold a "neighborhood" school concept. One respondent stated, "Caroline Street School presents itself as a family oriented, safe learning environment. I have always felt welcomed and invited to

participate in my child's education." Strong parent involvement appears to be a key perception on behalf of the respondents. Many indicated that the Home School Association (HSA) and its activities that encouraged parents and teachers to work together were major strengths. One of the respondents cited, "without the HSA, our children would not be exposed to half of the enrichment it receives." They went on to say, "the kids feel good when their parents get involved." A close contact between the parents and the school body and a good working relationship between parents, students and staff are attributed to the overall strengths of the school's success.

Areas perceived as in need of improvement generally fall into five areas of concern: (1) complacent tenured teachers, (2) lack of support for the school library media program, (3) improvement of parent-teacher communications, (4) more innovation in teaching and (5) better student control in the classroom, cafeteria and on the bus.

Several comments were directed towards the unusually large number of older teachers in the school. One suggested that there was a "need to bring in younger teachers and retire older teachers." Along those same lines, another parent commented that assessment of teacher performance needed to be improved. The respondent indicated that, ". . . any negative appraisal goes to deaf ears because the tenured teachers get to keep their jobs and salary levels regardless of their weaknesses in teaching." One perception attributes complacent teachers with burn out. This parent suggested that retention and promotion be linked to merit as opposed to tenure security.

There were several parents citing a concern about the level of support provided towards the school library media program. Of real concern was the availability of space allocated for the library and the need to increase the use of computers both in the classroom and in a computer laboratory. In addition to the small size of the library, parents would like to tie library services to strengthening the school's reading program. They would like to see the children use "the library on a more regular basis," and provide "more individual help for slow readers." Parents generally perceive that more phonics be taught in the earlier grades and that children need a background in these skills as well as those found in the whole language approach. Equal attention is perceived as needed by "advanced students." One respondent suggested that, ". . . those who would benefit from special assistance for their talents have no outlet." Another respondent suggested that, "more creative teaching including integrating and linking programs is needed." Certainly, a modern learning resources program linked to the teaching and learning process can articulate the needs for both remediation and enhancement. Finally, a parent indicated that, "I know how hard it was to get classes added and certain programs reinstated but the situation with our librarian is inexcusable." The respondent goes on to say, "It is so vitally important for our children to have access to the library as it is there that the knowledge needed for them to grow and learn is stored." With only a part-time library media specialist, it is very difficult to even provide traditional services. Other schools around the country link the library to actual instructional support services.

Most often the improvement of parent and school communications was cited to be in need of improvement. Participants generally perceived that communications needs to improve at the front desk, with teachers and with the Home School Association. Although participants to the survey attended Open House, they indicated that, "it was never defined who or where to get involved." This was in regards to volunteering. Another parent said that, "many parents work and are unable to attend HSA meetings." The parent goes on to say, "there should be alternate ways to voice an opinion on school activities without having to attend these meetings, which are long and tedious requiring a baby-sitter and additional expenditures." In regards to communicating with teachers, one parent said, "I feel cut off from my daughter's education; it is hard to get information or a sense of what is going on." Another respondent cited similar experiences indicating that, "Recently, we received information that my son would be in a remedial math class. I wasn't aware that he was having difficulty." Finally, other parents stated, "There needs to be more parental involvement in real issues not just in fund raising and social events." Parental participation in committee work is desired. It was generally felt that, "sometimes parents seem to be viewed with suspicion (i.e. what are you doing here?)." It was also viewed that people on the front desk "need to be more friendly and . . . parents ought to be made to feel more comfortable than I do."

Respondents to the survey generally perceived that more innovation is needed in the teaching and learning processes. One parent stated "much more innovation is needed on the part of

teachers." Further, the respondent said, "Teachers in some cases appear to teach to the middle of the class - the 4 or 5 children who would learn in spite of the system. The last thing small children need is lecturing style teaching." Along these same lines another respondent stated, "the teachers have fallen victim to relying on past years projects, ditto sheets and probably lesson plans instead of using new ideas and 'customizing' things to meet the children's needs." Further the respondent stated, "in general the teachers lack imagination and teach only to the average students needs - those in need of remedial programs get assistance, but those who would benefit from special assistance for their talents have no outlet." Nevertheless, remediation is in question by some. This was expressed by one respondent who stated "One area that concerns me is when my children do poorly in a test or concept, they never seem to revisit that area and go on to the next topic. I'm not sure what the answer is but it hasn't really been learned and will cause trouble for the student from then on." Respondents, in general, appeared to be sympathetic to the situation of teaching. In fact, many believe that with more and better use of parent volunteers in the classroom, in the library and in the special areas (e.g. music, art and PE), these problems would lessen.

The final area where respondents felt improvement should be made is in the area of student control in the classroom, cafeteria and on the buses. Many of the respondents attributed much of these perceived problems to class size and the student-teacher ratio. A few are concerned about the impact of inclusion. A parent indicated that, "keeping the number of children per teacher ratio 22:1 or less; with the trend towards inclusion teachers won't handle more than this number." The respondent goes on to say, "some kids slip between the cracks." Another indicated, "Smaller classes is a priority." There were some suggestions on how to reduce the student to adult ratio. One parent suggested, "we need more parent volunteers to work in the classroom especially with children who aren't 'caught up' to the grade level they are in." The respondent further indicated, "I do volunteer and I see an urgent need to help. Some of the children need more time than the teachers can give them without getting behind on the lesson plans." Finally, a parent said, "solicit parental assistance in educating their child after providing some guidelines about their involvement." This statement would suggest that if the school would establish clear cut guidelines parents would support the teachers in carrying out the instructional process. This would also suggest that parents would tend to view the teacher more as a manager or leader in the instructional processes. Whatever the case, parents certainly have expressed a willingness to assist teachers in bringing about improvements within the school.

There were many excellent suggestions made that would strengthen various programs within Caroline Street School. Many were directly connected with the perceived areas in need of improvement. Surprisingly, many were based on actual successful programs and models from other states. This would elude to the fact that many of the respondents to the survey were active educational consumers. It might also suggest that many are well traveled and have been exposed to other systems of education from which they could draw comparative references. For example, a respondent pointed out, "I would like to see the Core Knowledge Program instituted. For further information, on this program, contact Core Knowledge Foundation 2012-B Morton Drive, Charlottesville, VA 22903." Another parent said, "We have been spoiled by other curriculums such as in Wisconsin and others that have allowed for more independence among students." In a more universally directed statement, a respondent suggested, "the school has to help to instill the importance of gaining knowledge in a broad spectrum of topics; more emphasis on teaching students good study skills and the importance of taking responsibility for their own success." Another related comment suggested, "teach to children's abilities and eliminate whole class instruction." Still, another said, "more time for children to express their individual creativity, no matter what it may be." Finally, a parent said, "I sometimes feel too much is being thrown at the children curriculum wise. Often it seems subjects are touched on in order to satisfy a mandate. Focus on the basics, the other things are just clutter and consume time." In regards to instructional support, a respondent suggested, "introduce more technology into the school in all forms to facilitate information technologies and communications. It is not unrealistic to have telephones in the classroom, computer networking, even cable television capabilities; include CD ROM technologies in the library." The pattern of suggestions would indicate that parents responding to the questionnaire are very much aware of the trend towards the emergence of the information

society and they generally feel that the schools should be moving in the direction to address these new skills and the new philosophical base that would drive this concept. It is difficult to ascertain the urgency of this direction as there is very little to suggest that they feel that their children are being deprived of as of yet.

A few respondents would like to see cultural awareness extended. It was suggested that exposure to a foreign language and different cultural backgrounds could be extended school wide. Another parent suggested that Caroline Street School could, "start another language in Kindergarten." The parent goes on to say, "Integrate subject areas; if they are learning about forests for example, why not carry that through math, reading, etc., instead of breaking it out into separate subject areas. This would include more computer learning skills, keyboarding, games, etc." In addition to broadening children's understanding of the world, one respondent stated, "I feel that students should be more involved in the community; this would bring more connection with the schools and the community to make learning more relevant to the real world." This parent also feels that, "This will develop more pride in the community."

When respondents were asked what they perceived to be the highest priority issue that the Planning Team should address, a wealth of ideas emerged. Although these ideas reflected differing opinions, there were patterns of common thought. The first being that as parents, they perceive themselves as shareholders in their child's education and more parental involvement at all levels is essential. One parent suggested that parents should receive training on how they can best help at home so that they can support learning at school. Another parent suggested that parental involvement be "mandatory" or at least "encouraged." Nevertheless, parents perceive themselves to be an important part of the education process of their children's education and an untapped resource. One parent *said it all* in regards to helping children learn and addressing the class size problem. The parent said, ". . . draw on the talents and abilities of parents if there is no money for programs."

Building self-esteem and promoting self motivation through encouragement and recognition throughout their elementary school experience is among the priorities recommended. As one parent cites, "absolutely positively without a doubt, fostering a very high and healthy self-esteem in our children - it is so important in their success in all areas of their future life."

Improving instruction and the quality of teaching was also among the priorities. "Bringing in new ideas that help our kids become excited about learning, development and expansion in computer programs and computer availability; up-to-date texts; community involvement; and creativity ... should be a priority." Another respondent suggested "moving towards more individualized learning (IEPs), but also use more innovative approaches (cooperative learning)...," should be a priority for everyone. Other participants to the survey suggested that there should be a system of reporting weekly assignments and homework to parents. Moreover, "finding ways to disseminate curriculum topics to parents so we are informed about various state tests as well as classroom requirements," was another related priority. A respondent to the survey really emphasized this point when the parent said, "perhaps outlining goals by grades for the students; e.g. what is expected from the student by the end of the year." The parent continues by saying, "I am concerned by the broad spectrum of abilities/skills exhibited within each grade. I think that all grades especially 2nd and up could use specialized class time devoted to study habits, organization, etc. to help them learn to become responsible for their work. The transition to middle school is drastic and without these basic study skills, many of them don't know how to approach assignments methodically."

Finally, there were comments directed at improving teachers. A parent respondent stated, "Currently, every grade level has at least 1 very fine teacher and at least 1 poor teacher." They further point out, "we have had many of each over the years and watched our children thrive or suffer depending upon their individual teacher of the year." Similarly, another suggested, "There needs to be a shake up of teachers to move to new grade levels to start with a new enthusiasm for teaching." Further on the respondent suggested, "they shouldn't be comfortable at a grade level but rather on the edge looking for new approaches."

**Recommendations:**

Based on the quantitative and qualitative findings, the following recommendations were presented:

- With the proliferation of drugs, weapons and other dangerous and potentially harmful situations that have emerged in society, safety and security should continue to be a priority. The Planning Committee should review school wide practices and policies on a regular basis with a formal review every two years.

- To address academic goals and strengthen high expectations, a subcommittee should be formed to investigate policies and procedures outlined in the New York Sate Curriculum and Assessment Council publication entitled, "Learning Centered Curriculum and Assessment for New York State." This publication focuses on a new vision of learner centered curriculum and authentic assessment as outlined in the *New Compact for Learning*. The *Compact* is based on six key principals: 1) all children can learn; 2) focus on results; 3) aim for mastery; 4) provide the means; 5) provide authority with accountability; and 6) reward success and remedy failure. In addition to examining these documents, the subcommittee should propose an assessment model that should include but not be limited to: 1) diagnostic learning style inventories, 2) portfolios of students work; 3) performance assessment observations; 4) tests, projects, written samples of work, graphic representations, etc.; and 5) parent observations, children's self-critiques and other outside supportive materials.

- To insure that a clearly defined curricula is present and understood by the parents, the principal has been developing over the course of the year, a total, building wide curriculum outline. When this outline is completed and reviewed by the Planning Committee, it should be printed and distributed to the school community. This should provide parents with both a basic understanding of the content areas to be studied and the sequence in which it will be presented.

- In terms of perceived problems with matching instructional materials with students' abilities, consideration should be given to retaining a full time library/media specialist to support and extend classroom learning. In addition to assisting faculty with the selection and evaluation of learning resources, this vital individual could acquire valuable information related to the special needs of both individual teachers and the total faculty for their on-going professional development. Certainly, on-line database searches could be provided for faculty to provide them with the most up-to-date research on any given request. A faculty development collection of approximately $500.00 worth of materials was donated to the library. The collection should be updated periodically. Although major faculty development efforts are provided as a district level function, individual schools should be provided with funding to maintain faculty development initiatives as faculty and staff identify their needs within the building. This is not to say that should their needs coincide with other schools, resources cannot be shared. Certainly, invitations can be extended to other schools within the district for cooperative projects.

- To insure that monitoring of student progress is understood by all parents, the proposed authentic recommendations should be presented to the parents and the concepts related to this process should be explained in both writing and at a parent school wide meeting.

- To address the need for better communications related to homework assignments, a voice information line similar to the touch-tone source line installed at the Lake Avenue Elementary School in the district, should be considered. This system will afford parents with the opportunity to call in 24 hours a day and be able to pick up information on homework assignments, school activities, field trips, study tips, etc., over the phone. This

service has been extremely helpful to families in other schools. The HSA may also use this system to explain to parents avenues for becoming involved in school activities.

- To foster better parent school relations and to create a human resource pool of parent volunteers, a training program should be designed and presented to assist parents in study skills to help their children at home and to help them assist students as volunteers in the classroom. With the development and effective use of the core of volunteers, teachers may then begin to reduce whole class instruction and focus more on individual needs and abilities. As students acquire and refine their own study skills with the help of a parent "coach," they may being to assume greater responsibility of their own learning. Trained parent volunteers may also be used to assist in the school library/media center. Foster grandparents programs may also be considered.

- Recognition for achievement in the special areas should be considered. The subcommittee for the promotion of self-esteem should devise a recognition system that would promote student incentives to excel in the arts, music and in physical education. These areas are particularly important as "idea people" will be needed in the future to conceptualize creatively to meet societies future products and recreation needs. This would also recognize students whose talents lie in these non linear-sequential areas.

- Trained parent volunteers should be considered to assist bus drivers, cafeteria personnel and during recreation activities. This would provide adult supervision for the students and provide instructional personnel time to focus more on instructional activities.

- A subcommittee should be formed to examine the area of new technologies . From this investigative work, a technology plan should be developed that would gradually introduce technological assistance into the school environment. This plan may also consider a parent/student education component so that parents and their children could learn about technology together.

- To strengthen cultural awareness, resource people such as international students from area colleges, should be invited to classes and to share their culture with the children of Caroline Street School. Whenever possible, these activities should be integrated with the school curriculum.

- Finally, to promote a sense of community pride and to promote family-school initiatives, a committee should be formed to generate activities that would encourage parental involvement, community pride and social responsibility.

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## APPENDIX 1
## COVER LETTER - PARENT SURVEY

**Caroline Street Elementary School**
**310 Caroline Street**
**Saratoga Springs, NY 12866**

September 30, 1994

Dear families and friends:

On behalf of the Caroline Street School Planning Team, we would like to welcome you back to what we hope will be a very fruitful year for our children. The School Planning Team, composed of parents, teachers and school support staff, is in the process of focusing its energies towards planning for the future in a variety of areas. We view this task as an ongoing process and strongly desire community input. This year we are asking you to take a few minutes of your time to fill out a questionnaire. Generally, the questionnaire is designed to solicit your perceptions in regards to how well Caroline Street School is doing in several areas identified in Effective Schools research.

Be as candid as possible when you complete the questionnaire and do not place your names on the survey. In addition to a checklist, you will also have an opportunity to express your opinions in a free response category on the questionnaire. Should you have several children attending Caroline Street School and their experiences are considerably different, please fill out only one questionnaire but indicate those differences in the free response section.

It is the intention of the committee to review the findings and to identify the areas that need to be addressed. Further, the survey will assist the committee in setting priorities. A summary report will be drafted and shared.

Please return the questionnaire by October 14, 1994, in the self addressed envelope or deposit it in the box located in the foyer of the school marked "Parent Survey."

Community involvement is vital to any effective school and we thank you for your participation.

Sincerely,

David R. Murray
Parent Representative

Joanne D. Yepsen
Parent Representative

**APPENDIX 2**
**Caroline Street School Planning Team**
**Parent Survey**

# Caroline Street Elementary School
# School Planning Committee Survey
# Fall 1994

The objective of this survey is to identify the perceptions of the community towards various school characteristics. This will include identifying what you consider to be of importance and concern at Caroline Street Schoo. Collectively, the responses will help the committee establish goals and set priorities for future school planning and development. **We ask that you return the survey by October 14, 1994,** to Caroline Street Elementary School, 310 Caroline Street, Saratoga Springs, NY 12866, or drop in the box in the foyer labeled "Parent Survey."

*Please indicate what grade or grades your children are in by circling the appropriate number(s):*

K 1 2 3 4 5

**Part I. General Perceptions of Importance and Existence of Characteristics.**
For each statement, please fill in the one bubble in the column on the left that represents how important you fee the characteristic is **and** fill in one bubble in the column on the right that represents how often you feel the characteristic exists in the school.

| | IMPORTANCE | | | | | EXISTENCE | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | PRIORITY | VERY IMPORTANT | IMPORTANT | SOMEWHAT IMPORTANT | NOT IMPORTANT | ALWAYS | USUALLY | SOMETIMES | RARELY | NEVER |
| **Positive School Climate:** | | | | | | | | | | |
| 1. The school buildings are kept clean and in good condition. | O | O | O | O | O | O | O | O | O | O |
| 2. Students are proud of this school. | O | O | O | O | O | O | O | O | O | O |
| 3. Teachers and staff have pride in the school. | O | O | O | O | O | O | O | O | O | O |
| 4. The school is a safe place. | O | O | O | O | O | O | O | O | O | O |
| 5. Teachers and staff treat students fairly and consistently. | O | O | O | O | O | O | O | O | O | O |
| 6. The purpose of the school is clear. | O | O | O | O | O | O | O | O | O | O |
| 7. Parents feel comfortable and welcome when visiting the school. | O | O | O | O | O | O | O | O | O | O |
| 8. Students enjoys coming to school. | O | O | O | O | O | O | O | O | O | O |

OVER

| | IMPORTANCE | | | | | EXISTENCE | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | PRIORITY | VERY IMPORTANT | IMPORTANT | SOMEWHAT IMPORTANT | NOT IMPORTANT | ALWAYS | USUALLY | SOMETIMES | RARELY | NEVER |
| **Academic Goals & High Expectations:** | | | | | | | | | | |
| 9. Parents know that the school has high expectations for all students. | O | O | O | O | O | O | O | O | O | O |
| 10. Learning is seen as the most important reason for attending school. | O | O | O | O | O | O | O | O | O | O |
| 11. Students are treated in ways that emphasize success and potential rather than focusing on failures and shortcomings. | O | O | O | O | O | O | O | O | O | O |
| **Clearly Defined Curricula & Planning Process:** | | | | | | | | | | |
| 12. Parents are involved in planning committees. | O | O | O | O | O | O | O | O | O | O |
| 13. The instructional program is coordinated within and between grades. | O | O | O | O | O | O | O | O | O | O |
| 14. An outline of the curriculum is made available to parents. | O | O | O | O | O | O | O | O | O | O |
| 15. Instructional materials, resources, and learning activities are matched to students' abilities. | O | O | O | O | O | O | O | O | O | O |
| **Monitoring of Student Progress:** | | | | | | | | | | |
| 16. Students who are not working up to their potential are identified and helped. | O | O | O | O | O | O | O | O | O | O |
| 17. Teachers communicate with parents on student progress and indicate areas of strength and weaknesses (conferences, notes, phone calls). | O | O | O | O | O | O | O | O | O | O |
| **Homework:** | | | | | | | | | | |
| 18. Teachers let parents know that homework is important. | O | O | O | O | O | O | O | O | O | O |
| 19. Parental assistance with school work is welcomed and sought. | O | O | O | O | O | O | O | O | O | O |
| 20. Homework assignments are clearly communicated. | O | O | O | O | O | O | O | O | O | O |
| 21. Homework is purposeful and relevant. | O | O | O | O | O | O | O | O | O | O |

| | IMPORTANCE | | | | | EXISTENCE | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | PRIORITY | VERY IMPORTANT | IMPORTANT | SOMEWHAT IMPORTANT | NOT IMPORTANT | ALWAYS | USUALLY | SOMETIMES | RARELY | NEVER |
| **Parent & Community Involvement:** | | | | | | | | | | |
| 22. The school staff encourages parents' support in achieving the mission of the school. | O | O | O | O | O | O | O | O | O | O |
| 23. There is an active parent group in the building. | O | O | O | O | O | O | O | O | O | O |
| 24. Community people, including parents, are invited to the school to share information. | O | O | O | O | O | O | O | O | O | O |
| 25. Parents and community members are involved in school activities through advisory committees. | O | O | O | O | O | O | O | O | O | O |
| 26. Ways for parents to become involved in school activities are clear. | O | O | O | O | O | O | O | O | O | O |
| 27. Staff members provide parents with information and techniques to help students learn at home. | O | O | O | O | O | O | O | O | O | O |
| **Student Participation:** | | | | | | | | | | |
| 28. Extracurricular activities are available to all students. | O | O | O | O | O | O | O | O | O | O |
| 29. Students feel that they are responsible for their learning and success. | O | O | O | O | O | O | O | O | O | O |
| **Rewards & Incentives:** | | | | | | | | | | |
| 30. Student achievement is recognized by the school. | O | O | O | O | O | O | O | O | O | O |
| 31. Students know about the rewards and what they have to do to get them. | O | O | O | O | O | O | O | O | O | O |
| 32. Personal student effort and creativity are recognized. | O | O | O | O | O | O | O | O | O | O |
| 33. Student achievements are featured in school displays, newspapers, newsletters and other media. | O | O | O | O | O | O | O | O | O | O |
| **Safety & Discipline:** | | | | | | | | | | |
| 34. The code of conduct has been reviewed for students and parents. | O | O | O | O | O | O | O | O | O | O |
| 35. Parents provide support to the school on discipline policies. | O | O | O | O | O | O | O | O | O | O |
| 36. Teachers, staff and administrators are working toward consistency in discipline procedures. | O | O | O | O | O | O | O | O | O | O |
| 37. Students feels safe at school. | O | O | O | O | O | O | O | O | O | O |

**Part II. Free Response.**
Please include, in written form, any comments you may have.

1. What do you perceive to be the strengths of the Caroline Street School programs?

2. What do you perceive to be areas that need to be improved at Caroline Street School?

3. What suggestions would you make to strengthen various programs in the school?

4. What do you perceive as the highest priority issue that the Planning Team should address?

5. Other comments: